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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0504

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
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AND CIVIL RIGHTS

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WATER, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

November 19, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to call upon you to fulfill the solemn promise that you made to the victims of the Caldor Fire when you visited the scene on September 13<sup>th</sup> and promised to help them in the aftermath. This fire is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest and 16<sup>th</sup> most destructive fire in the history of California. It literally wiped out the Gold Rush-era town of Grizzly Flats and destroyed nearly 800 homes.

On that occasion, when officials from El Dorado County and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) apprised you of the need to assist these displaced families, you said, "we're going to take care of them...there's a lot that we can do, and it starts off being a federal responsibility, in my view."

To fulfill this pledge, it is imperative that you reverse the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) denial of the Governor's appeal for Individual Assistance for the victims of the Caldor Fire. As I noted in my letters to you of September 17<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>, the denial of Individual Assistance, if allowed to stand, will have devastating consequences on survivors whose homes and livelihoods have been destroyed.

The FEMA denial is a stunning double standard when viewed next to assistance granted in other fires of far less impact. For example, Cal OES identified nine other Individual Assistance approvals in 2021, which cumulatively had fewer homes destroyed than those destroyed by the Caldor Fire alone.

Survivors hoping to rebuild their homes face an insurance deficit of \$200,000 or more. Many survivors are uninsured, and nearly all of them are underinsured due to the severity of recent wildfire seasons. Survivors who were able to remain on their properties still lack access to potable water.

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Moreover, residents of Grizzly Flats are disproportionately low-income, elderly, and socioeconomically vulnerable. Those who work or own businesses in the region were shut out of work for weeks as the fire blazed, and the regional economy will continue to suffer if survivors are not able to rebuild. Critical infrastructure has been either damaged or completely destroyed, including schools, fire stations, and the Grizzly Flats Post Office. While local officials, residents, and organizations are doing everything in their capacity to provide support to one another and rebuild, they will not be able to recover without the federal assistance that they desperately need and deserve.

Last year, when FEMA denied the Governor's request for Individual Assistance for the Creek Fire in Fresno and Madera Counties, President Trump immediately reversed the decision and granted Individual Assistance.

You made a promise to the victims of the Caldor Fire, and now is the time to fulfill it by taking the same action.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom McClintock", written in a cursive style.

Tom McClintock